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TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

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Annual Report



OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

AND

Chief Public Health
Inspector

FOR THE YEAR 1956

TAUNTON:

H. G. MOUNTER AND CO., LTD.,

PRINTERS

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

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FOR THE YEAR 1956

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF, 1956

*Medical Officer of Health and Medical Superintendent of the
Taunton Isolation Hospital and Taunton
Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Taunton :*

HUGH MORRISON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.
(appt. August, 1946).

Senior Public Health Inspector :
W. PLIMMER, M.A.P.H.I. (appt. July, 1950).

Additional Public Health Inspector :
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To :

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1956. The report contains the usual information on the health and sanitary circumstances of the district. This has again been divided into two sections, the first referring to the province of the Medical Officer of Health, and the second contributed by the Chief Public Health Inspector. The report, in the main, follows the same lines as that of the previous year, but certain fresh facts have been incorporated in the various sections.

Some features of the year under review are as follows :—

- (1) There has been a further striking decrease in the number of new cases of Tuberculosis. The prevalence of the disease is falling all over the country, which may partly be due to a natural fluctuation in the virulence of the infection; but there seems no doubt that improvement in living and working conditions, and more efficient methods of treatment have contributed largely to this very gratifying development.
- (2) Poliomyelitis had a low incidence in West Somerset during the year, and only two cases were notified in the Taunton Rural District. Close quarantine of family contacts is still the policy of the Council, but there was no real opportunity to test its efficacy during 1956. Much is hoped for from immunisation against poliomyelitis, but vaccine had not yet become available to begin this procedure.
- (3) The completion of 91 new Council houses during the course of the year is notable, this being double the number coming into use in the previous year. Some effect is beginning to be seen on the waiting list for Council houses, which fell from 610 to 530. The number of caravans used for permanent housing continued to mount, and this is a trend which one would be rather happy to see reversed.

- (4) A note will be found in the Public Health Inspector's section on the implementation of the Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955. The object of these is to secure more hygienic storing, handling and preparation of foodstuffs, with a view to lessening the incidence of infections spread by food. The application of the Regulations involves a wide range of activity by the inspectors and by those responsible for food handling and distribution. It is pleasing to report that very willing co-operation has been forthcoming from all parties concerned with this work.
- (5) Two subjects which are coming very much to the fore in Public Health thinking and planning are care of the aged and chronic sick, and preventive work in the field of mental health. There is nothing particular to report on these topics as they affected the Taunton Rural District in the year 1956, but developments may be foreseen in this direction which may form the subject of future report.

Once again I wish to thank the Members of the Council, the Clerk and Officials of other Departments, the Staff of the Public Health Department, and the Matron and Staff of the Isolation Hospital for their willing assistance and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

HUGH MORRISON.

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

Statistics of the Area for the Year 1956

Area (in acres)	70,675
Estimate of resident population, mid-year 1956 ...	22,230
Census population, 1951	20,516
No. of inhabited houses according to the Rate Books on 31st December, 1956	6,045
Rateable value 31st December, 1956	£174,841
Sum represented by a 1d. Rate, year 1956-57	£797

Physical Features and Social Conditions

Taunton Rural District lies in the south-western region of Somerset, surrounding Taunton Borough, the County Town. It is roughly triangular in shape, with Taunton Borough situated near the middle of the triangle. The boundary of the district is formed on the north by the Rural Districts of Williton and Bridgwater; on the east and south-east by the Rural Districts of Langport and Chard; on the south by the County of Devon; on the south-west and west by the Rural District of Wellington.

There is considerable variation in the type of country found in different parts of the district: in the north and north-west there is high ground forming portions of the Quantock and Brendon Hills; in the south the land rises to the hill parish of Churchstanton lying in the Blackdowns; between these regions lies the fertile valley of Taunton Deane, with the ground falling towards the east to the flat moors and marshy ground surrounding the lower reaches of Tone and Parret. Geologically also, the formations vary. In the north are found chiefly old and new red sandstone; in the south, lower lias and upper greensand; the valley regions have new red marl, new red sandstone and alluvium.

The climate is equable, with an average annual rainfall of 36.6 ins., and an average mean daily temperature of about 41° F. in January and 62° F. in July.

Rich arable and pasture land covers most of the district, but some of the hill regions are in the rough uncultivated state, and the soil on the Blackdown Hills tends to be poor in quality. In the eastern parishes the land is subject to seasonal flooding. Communications are good, and almost all parts of the district are easily accessible by road. Following the Tone valley through the middle of the district runs one of the main lines of the Western Region of British Railways and three branch lines leave it at or near Taunton to run to the north, south and west.

There are thirty-two parishes with estimated populations varying from 69 to 3,147. Habitations are widely scattered over these parishes, but there are several sizeable villages, the largest being Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull, Lydeard St. Lawrence, North Curry and Trull.

Most of the inhabitants are engaged in some form of agriculture, dairy farming being particularly important. General farming is also largely practised, and allied activities are withy growing and basket-making, fruit farming and cider-making. There is a paper mill in the district which employs a fair number of people, and another source of employment for men is stone-quarrying which is carried out on a considerable scale. Many of the residents in the rural district travel daily to Taunton to work in factories and other establishments.

There is one large institution in the district, namely Tone Vale Hospital in the parish of Norton Fitzwarren, which, with its patients and resident staff, accounts for a population of about 1,200.

VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR

With reference to the figures which follow, it should be pointed out that the standardisation of the rate for births and deaths allows for the differing age and sex distribution of the populations in different areas, and is obtained by multiplying the crude rate by a comparability factor for the district furnished by the Registrar General. This enables comparison to be made with the figures for the country as a whole, or with those for other districts.

1. Births.

(a) Live Births.

	M.	F.	Total	} Crude birth rate per 1,000 of the estimated resi- dent population 13.36
Legitimate	130	153	283	
Illegitimate	11	3	14	
Totals	141	156	297	

{ Standardised Birth Rate, Taunton R.D. ...	14.96
{ Birth Rate, England and Wales ...	15.7

(b) Still Births.

Total	8
{ Rate per 1,000 (live and still) births—	
Taunton R.D.	26.23
England and Wales	23.9
{ Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population—	
Taunton R.D.	0.36
England and Wales	0.37

2. Deaths.

(a) Total Deaths	336
Crude Rate per 1,000 estimated resident population	15.11
{ Standardised Death Rate, Taunton R.D.	9.82
{ Death Rate for England and Wales	11.7

(b) Maternal Mortality.

Total maternal deaths from all causes	1
---------------------------------------	---

(c) Infant Mortality.

Deaths of infants under 1 year of age—

Total	...	...	...	...	8
Deaths among legitimate infants	...	...	...	...	8
„ illegitimate „	...	...	...	...	0
{ Death Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births—					
Taunton R.D.	26.23
England and Wales	23.8

(d) Deaths from Cancer (all ages)—

Total	43
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Infant Mortality during 1956

Cause of Death				Under 1 week	1 to 2 weeks	1 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	Total under 1 year
Prematurity	...	...	...	2	—	—	—	2
Maternal Toxæmia	...	...	..	1	—	—	—	1
Collapse of Lung	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	1
Congenital Spinal Defect	...	...	...	—	1	—	—	1
Congenital Heart Disease	...	...	...	2	—	1	—	3
Total	...	...	...	6	1	1	—	8

Causes of Death during 1956

	M.	F.	Total.
Tuberculosis, respiratory	2	1	3
Tuberculosis, other	—	—	—
Syphilitic disease	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Whooping cough	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
Acute poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases ...	1	—	1
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	3	7	10
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus ...	11	1	12
Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	—	—
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms ...	13	7	20
Leukæmia, aleukæmia	1	—	1
Diabetes	2	2	4
Vascular lesions of nervous system	14	20	34
Coronary disease, angina	34	17	51
Hypertension with heart disease	3	5	8
Other heart disease	17	30	47
Other circulatory disease	14	13	27
Influenza	1	—	1
Pneumonia	17	19	36
Bronchitis	6	5	11
Other disease of respiratory system	—	1	1
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	—	1
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhœa	—	—	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	—	1	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—	1
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	—	1	1
Congenital malformations	2	3	5
Other defined and ill-defined diseases ...	17	32	49
Motor vehicle accidents	3	3	6
All other accidents	2	2	4
Suicide	—	—	—
Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—
All Causes—Total ...	165	171	336

GENERAL PROVISION of HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

Domiciliary Services

(1) Medical and Nursing

There are six general medical practitioners living and carrying on the main part of their practice in different areas of the district. In addition to this, most of the Taunton Borough practitioners have some rural district residents on their lists, and there is also, as would be expected, some overlap from the surrounding rural districts in the provision of medical attention. There are adequate arrangements for domiciliary consultation, when required, with consultants serving the Taunton area, and speaking generally, the practice of medicine in the district is of a high standard. The provisions for domiciliary nursing are also satisfactory.

(2) Home Help Service

This service, administered by the Somerset County Council, is now well established in the district, and invaluable assistance is given in many cases of illness and the domestic difficulties arising therefrom. There is no doubt that this is one of the most useful of all public services. I am indebted to the County Organiser for the following analysis of cases where help was arranged in Taunton Rural District during 1956.

Post operation	...	...	...	...	9
Maternity	...	...	...	...	22
Old age	...	...	...	...	29
Chronic illness	...	...	...	...	22
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	...	1
Emergency illness	...	...	...	...	8
Families of children	...	...	...	...	2
Total					93

Hospital Services

The Hospital Services of the district are administered by the Taunton Hospital Management Committee, under the general direction of the S.W. Regional Hospital Board. Some of the provisions for the needs of various types of patient are detailed below :—

(1) General Medical and Surgical

The Taunton and Somerset Hospital together with Musgrove Park Hospital which is also situated in the Borough of Taunton, and which is probably eventually destined to supersede the first-named establishment, cater for most medical and surgical conditions. Musgrove Park Hospital takes most of the adult cases, and also has a comprehensive Pædiatric Department. The Taunton and Somerset Hospital is in the meantime dealing with Orthopædics and Ophthalmology. It also houses the Casualty Department for the area. Both hospitals have out-patient facilities in addition to in-patient beds. Certain cases requiring special investigation or treatment such as neurosurgery or radiotherapy are referred to Bristol Hospitals for this purpose.

(2) Infectious Diseases

Cases of infectious disease from Taunton Rural District are sent to the Taunton Isolation Hospital, situated in the Borough of Taunton. The bulk of the Isolation Hospital work is done in individual rooms and cubicles. The hospital has been admitting in the past year or two many cases, especially among children, of various pyrexial and nutritional illnesses not coming into the strict category of notifiable diseases, which would formerly have been treated in General Hospitals. Home isolation is carried out wherever the home conditions are satisfactory. Most cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum are admitted to the Isolation Hospital and also cases of Puerperal Pyrexia. Cases of Poliomyelitis and patients suspected to be suffering from this condition have become one of the chief problems, especially in the summer months.

(3) Tuberculosis

Cases of pulmonary and non-pulmonary Tuberculosis come under the Regional Hospital Board for treatment, which is supervised by the Chest Physicians for the area. The Sanatoria are at Quantock, Wincanton and Taunton for pulmonary cases. Cases requiring orthopædic treatment are admitted to Bath Orthopædic Hospital. Compton Bishop Children's Home, near Axbridge was closed at the end of the year, largely because of the decrease in the number of children requiring treatment for tuberculosis or pre-tubercular conditions.

(4) **Poliomyelitis**

Suspected cases are sent for diagnosis to the Taunton Isolation Hospital. If the condition is confirmed they are seen by Regional Specialists who arrange for continuation treatment either as out-patients or as in-patients at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.

(5) **Chronic Sick**

Patients are received into hospitals, chiefly those in Taunton and Wellington, which have now passed from Public Assistance administration to that of the Regional Hospital Board. The status and reputation of these institutions is improving, more or less rapidly, as their association with the less desirable features of the old Poor Law fades from public memory. A geriatric service for the Taunton area is in process of development.

Powers now exist under the National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47, for the compulsory removal to a suitable institution of persons who are not able to devote to themselves and are not receiving from other people, proper care and attention. There are adequate safeguards against misuse of these powers, but cases do crop up from time to time when they are very useful and in the true interest of the person concerned. The onus is thrown upon the Medical Officer of Health to investigate these cases and to advise on whether these powers ought to be invoked. Once again the procedure was not required during the year, but a number of cases were kept under review.

(6) **Mental Sick**

Cases are admitted to the Mental Hospital at Tone Vale, near Taunton. The psychiatric specialists conduct out-patients' clinics for the area, and it is felt that now, more than ever before, mental patients are having the benefit of treatment at an earlier and more hopeful stage of the disease.

Mentally defective cases are well provided for at Sandhill Park Hospital which is situated in Taunton Rural District.

Clinics and Treatment Centres

(1) Tuberculosis

Clinics for patients suffering from this disease, and for the supervision of suspects and contacts, are held by the Chest Physicians at Musgrove Park Hospital. There is an After-Care Committee working in co-operation with these clinics. Mass radiography has been carried out from time to time on various groups of the County population, by a team working from a centre in Bristol, but this service has not been called upon to deal with residents in Taunton Rural District.

(2) Venereal Disease

A combined Clinic and Treatment Centre is carried on at the Taunton and Somerset Hospital which caters for male and female patients of this and surrounding districts. This centre has now come under the administration of the Regional Hospital Board. Early cases of syphilis are usually sent to Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, for a fortnight's intensive penicillin treatment as in-patients. Afterwards they continue observation and treatment at the Taunton Clinic.

(3) Maternity and Child Welfare

The Maternity and Child Welfare Acts are administered by the County Council, under whose supervision are also the Health Visitors and Midwives practising within the area. There is an excellent Maternity Home in the Urban District of Wellington at which some of the mothers from Taunton Rural District are confined. Obstetric Consultants in Taunton are available for consultation with Medical Practitioners in the District. Abnormal and complicated cases can be admitted for hospital treatment when necessary. Every case of Puerperal Pyrexia and Maternal Mortality is investigated by the Medical Staff of the County Council.

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory Service has a Laboratory in Taunton which undertakes the bacteriological examination of swabs, blood, faeces and sputum, etc. This service is available also to the Doctors practising in the District. Bacteriological and chemical analyses are also undertaken for the examination of milk, foods,

water supplies and sewage effluents, etc. The co-operation and assistance of the Public Health Laboratory Staff in investigating all types of bacteriological and epidemiological problems is of the greatest value.

Ambulance Facilities

Ambulance transport for all cases has now become the responsibility of the Somerset County Council. A central ambulance department has been set up which arranges for vehicles to be provided as required. A twenty-four hour service is maintained throughout each day of the week.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Acute Infectious Diseases

The following table gives the number of notifications received for various notifiable diseases, their age groups, and the number admitted to Taunton Isolation Hospital:—

Diseases	No. of Notifications.	AGE GROUPS.								No. admitted to Isolation Hospital.
		1st year of life.	1-2 incl.	3-4 incl.	5-9 incl.	10-14 incl.	15-24 incl.	25 & over	Age unknown	
Scarlet Fever ..	20	—	1	2	11	3	—	1	2	7
Dysentery ...	3	—	—	—	—	1	—	2	—	3
Measles ...	65	1	8	12	35	5	—	1	3	9
Whooping cough ...	4	—	1	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pneumonia ...	7	—	—	—	—	—	1	6	—	5
Polio-myelitis ...	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	2
Erysipelas ...	5	—	—	—	—	—	1	4	—	—
Puerperal Pyrexia	3	—	—	—	—	—	1	2	—	2
Meningococcal Infection ...	1	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1

The following table shows notification rates of the above diseases for Taunton Rural District compared with the same rates in the previous year. In each instance these rates are calculated as numbers of notified cases per 1,000 of population, except with Puerpera Pyrexia in which the rate is furnished by the number of cases per 1,000 total live and still births:—

Diseases.	No. of Notifications in Taunton Rural District.	Rates for Taunton R.D.	
		1956	1955
Scarlet Fever	20	0.90	1.14
Dysentery	3	0.13	0.00
Measles	65	2.92	6.90
Whooping Cough	4	0.18	2.57
Pneumonia	7	0.31	0.10
Poliomyelitis	2	0.09	0.20
Erysipelas	5	0.22	0.24
Puerperal Pyrexia	3	9.84	6.43
Meningococcal Infection	1	0.04	0.05

There is nothing particular to note on the incidence of notifiable infectious diseases during the year as set out in the above table, except that the prevalence of Whooping Cough was fortunately very low.

Tuberculosis

The following table gives the number of new cases of respiratory and non-respiratory Tuberculosis notified during 1956 and mortality from the disease :—

New Cases and Mortality during 1956

Ages in Years				New Cases				Deaths			
				Resp'tory		Non-Resp.		Resp'tory		Non-Resp.	
				M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 — 1	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 — 5	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 — 10	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
10 — 15	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
15 — 20	...	...	...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
20 — 25	...	...	...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
25 — 35	...	...	...	3	—	1	—	—	—	—	—
35 — 45	...	...	...	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
45 — 55	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
55 — 65	...	...	...	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
65 and up...	...	...	...	—	1	—	—	1	1	—	—
Not known	...	...	...	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	...	...	...	8		1		3		—	

At the end of the year, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names and addresses of 119 cases of pulmonary Tuberculosis and 23 cases of non-pulmonary Tuberculosis.

As will be seen from the table the decrease in the number of new cases of Tuberculosis coming under observation has continued during 1956.

Diphtheria Prophylaxis

Immunisation against Diphtheria continues to be carried out by the Medical Staff of the Somerest County Council and by the Medical Practitioners in the District. The County Council's Immunisation

Scheme, which was begun in Taunton Rural District during 1941, continues to make progress, and the following figures supplied by the County Council show the condition of the child population as regards immunisation at the end of 1956—

Pre-School Children : aged 0—4 years

Number Immunised.	Estimated percentage immunised of total children in this Age Group.
639	46.51

School Children : aged 5—14 years

Number Immunised.	Estimated percentage immunised of total children in this Age Group.
1,029	57.0

The percentage of children immunised in both groups is too low, and continuing efforts are required to improve upon these figures. One must emphasise that attention should be given to this matter by parents and others concerned at a time well before the child reaches the age of one year.

The full benefits of immunisation in this country are now beginning to come to light, and the following table shows the dramatic change which has taken place in the incidence and mortality of the disease.

Diphtheria Statistics—England and Wales

Year	Diphtheria Notifications	Diphtheria Deaths
1946	11,986	472
1956	63	7

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA

Water Supply

Of the 6,045 houses in the district, it is estimated that 4,377 are connected with a public piped water supply.

Public water undertakings owned by the Council are five in number, viz:—

- | | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. Eastern Parishes (formerly Portman) | } | Treated by
chlorina-
tion |
| 2. Churchstanton | | |
| 3. Cothelstone | | |
| 4. West Bagborough | } | Unchlor-
inated |
| 5. Westleigh, Lydeard St. Lawrence | | |

All these supplies are subjected to regular chemical analysis and bacteriological testing, and a tabular statement of these water analyses will be found in the report of the Chief Public Health Inspector. The only one to cause any anxiety is that of the West Bagborough water in which the bacteriological counts have been fluctuating in an unsatisfactory way. It may be necessary for the Council to consider chlorination here unless an improvement takes place. The supplies as a whole in the area are only just adequate for present needs.

In addition to the supplies owned by the Taunton Rural District Council there is an extensive portion of the district served by the Taunton Corporation Water Undertaking. The following parishes are supplied as a whole or in part from this source:—Bishops Hull, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Corfe, Creech St. Michael, Norton Fitzwarren, Orchard Portman, Pitminster, Ruishton, Staple-grove, Stoke St. Mary, Thornfalcon, Trull and West Monkton. This water is regularly tested and kept under supervision by the Taunton Borough authorities, and has maintained a consistently excellent standard.

The remainder of the district is supplied chiefly from wells, most of them coming into the shallow category, and thus being very liable to pollution. Cleaning of contaminated wells followed by chlorination sometimes results in a pure supply for a period of time, but the trouble is always likely to recur, and the wells can never be relied upon to provide a constant wholesome supply. Often boiling of water before use has to be advised, and the problem will not be satisfactorily solved until piped water is taken to the properties concerned. Sometimes shortage occurs in the well supplies, particularly in West Hatch parish, but this was not generally a cause of concern during the year under review.

No plumbo-solvent action exists in any of the water supplies of the district.

The Taunton Borough Council's Scheme for constructing a reservoir at Clatworthy will be commenced during the year 1957.

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Of the 32 parishes in the District, only seven have sewage disposal works, and of these works, perhaps three may be regarded as meeting disposal requirements satisfactorily, namely those in the parishes of Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull and Norton Fitzwarren, while the remaining four at Combe Florey, Hatch Beauchamp, North Curry and Corfe are inadequate for their purpose.

Reference was made in last year's Report to the large number of pail closets which are still in use in the District, and it is good to see the County Medical Officer of Health also condemning these in his Annual Report with the words: "The pail closet is an anachronism in this modern age." Some of the drawbacks of septic tank disposal were also touched upon. The general economic condition of the country is the main factor impeding the setting up of

modern disposal systems in this as in other districts. However, by the end of 1956, the Taunton Borough Council Works at Ham was nearing completion, and it seemed certain that a substantial part of the Rural District would begin to benefit from this at some time in the following year. Plans were also being pressed forward for two of the worst served areas, namely Creech St Michael with Ruishton, and Stoke St. Gregory.

Housing

Provision of houses in the District by the Council has gone on steadily throughout the year. 91 were completed in 1956, and since the end of the war 549 have been built. In addition to this, about 298 houses have been built by private enterprise during the same period. This building activity has had some effect on the waiting list of families requiring accommodation, but continued efforts in this direction will be required for some time to come. There were about 530 applicants for Council houses on the waiting list at the end of 1956.

Considerable progress was made with the work of slum clearance. The Sub-Committee appointed for the purpose inspected houses in various parishes of the district along with officers of the Council, the member or members for the parishes concerned being also present during these inspections. The following table shows the number of houses inspected, and the number in which it was decided to take action under the Housing Act, Sec. 11 (Demolition or Undertaking that property will not be used for human habitation) or Sec.25 (Clearance Area procedure). Of those inspected but not coming into either of these categories, the great majority required repair or reconstruction work of varying extent to be carried out in order to bring them up to modern standards, and an approach to the owners with this object in view was called for:—

Parish	No. of Houses Inspected	Sec. 11 Procedure	Sec. 25 Procedure
Hatch Beauchamp	1	1	—
North Curry	11	8	—
Norton Fitzwarren	10	6	—
Pitminster	10	4	—
West Hatch	9	7	—

The following table gives a summary of action taken in respect of unfit houses inspected during 1956 and previous years :—

Action	No. of Houses
1. Acquired by Council for demolition (site to be used for erecting new houses)	6
2. Demolition Order made ...	4
3. Undertaking given not to use for human habitation	23
4. Houses actually demolished ...	4
5. Clearance Area Procedure carried out	5 (in one terraced block)

A number of Improvement Grants under the Housing Act, 1949, were made by the Council during recent years. Consideration by members of Council and officials of applications for grants of this type has to be extremely careful and detailed, since considerable disbursement of public money is involved, but in cases which fulfil the requirements, this is a most useful way of saving property which would otherwise fall below the housing standards now demanded. During the year under review grants were approved in respect of 28 houses, and 58 had been the subject of grants in previous years.

Many families in the district, some of them perhaps from choice, but more of them probably from necessity, make use of caravans as permanent dwellings. It cannot be felt that this is the most desirable way of life, more especially when children form part of the family. During 1956, 36 moveable dwelling licences were issued, most of them for individual caravans, but some for sites capable of accommodating several. It was estimated that 203 caravans were in use with a total population of about 410.

Of the ex-military camps which were unofficially occupied in 1946, all have fallen into disuse for housing purposes except Sandhill Park where there still were, at the end of 1956, about 72 occupied huts.

The Council's building programme was as follows :—

Parish.	Number completed during 1956		Number under construction at 31st Dec., 1956
Norton Fitzwarren	...	52	2
Stoke St. Gregory	...	4	—
West Hatch	...	4	—
Creech St. Michael	...	6	—
Lydeard St. Lawrence	...	12	—
Kingston St. Mary	...	2	—
Hatch Beauchamp	...	11	—
			2

The following table shows the Parishes in which the Council have erected houses under the various Acts :—

Parish.	Address.		Number of Houses.
Bishops Hull	...	1/74 Smithy Cottages	74
do.	...	20/35 Mountway Cottages	16
		1/34 Nortfield Estate	34 124
Bishops Lydeard	...	1/8 Gore Cottages	8
do.	...	1/10 Pound Lane	10
do.	...	1/12 Mill Lane Cottages	12
do.	...	1/30 Halfyard Cottages	30
do.	...	1/52 Darby Way	52
			— 112
Cheddon Fitzpaine	...	1/8 School Cottages	8
do.	...	1/10 Cheddon Lawns	10
			— 18
Churchstanton	...	1/4 Stapley Cottages	4
do.	...	1/4 Church Road Cottages	4
do.	...	1/16 Gillards Mead	16
			— 24

Parish.	Address.	Number of Houses.
Combe Florey ...	1/4 Meadowside ...	4
Corfe ...	1/4 Brook Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/4 Adcombe View ...	4
		— 8
Creech St. Michael ...	1/8 Ryes Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/12 Charlton Lane Cottages ...	12
do. ...	1/4 Cheads Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/16 Rocketts Cottages ...	16
do. ...	1/10 Creechwood Terrace ...	10
		— 50
Curland ...	1/4 Castle View ...	4
Hatch Beauchamp ...	1/4 Palmers Green Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/8 Crimthorne Cotts ...	8
do. ...	2/12 Neroche View ...	11
		— 23
Kingston St. Mary ...	1/6 Parks Cottages ...	6
do. ...	1 and 2 Chaces ...	2
do. ...	1/8 Greenway Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/4 Fulford Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Parsonage Cottages ...	10
do. ...	1/8 Quantock Way ...	8
		— 38
Lydeard St. Lawrence..	1/8 Cross Croft ...	8
do ...	1/20 Nethercott Way ...	20
		— 28
North Curry ...	1/6 Oxen Lane ...	6
do. ...	1/4 Backham Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Croft Cottages ...	10
do. ...	1/8 Lillesdon Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/8 Cricket Cottages ...	8
do. ...	1/24 Town Close ...	24
		— 60
Norton Fitzwarren ...	1/4 Burnshill Terrace ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Station Road Cottages ...	10
do. ...	1/4 Manleys Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/4 Court Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/108 Hilly Park ...	108
do. ...	6/52 Rectory Road ...	24
do. ...	19/37 Rectory Road ...	10
		— 164
Otterford ...	1/4 Brook Cottages ...	4

Parish		Address	Houses Number of
Pitminster	...	1/8 Littleham Cottages	8
do.	...	1/8 Colleylake Cottages	8
			— 16
Ruishton	...	1/5 Ruishton Lane Cottages	5
do.	...	1/3 Lipe Lane Cottages	3
do.	...	1/4 Slades Cottages	4
do.	...	1/12 Steart Cottages	12
do.	...	1/28 Coronation Close	28
			— 52
Staplegrove	...	1/6 Hillhead Cottages	6
Stoke St. Gregory	...	1/16 Willey Road	16
do.	...	1/8 Stathe Cottages	8
do.	...	1/20 Woodhill Terrace	20
do.	...	1 and 2 Meare Green Cottages	2
do.	...	1/6 Polkes Field	6
			— 52
Stoke St. Mary	...	1/4 Homefield Cottages	4
do.	...	1/8 Pattens Cottages	8
			— 12
Thornfalcon	...	1/8 Glebe Cottages	8
Trull	...	1 and 2 Horts Cottages	2
do.	...	7/14 Mill Lane	8
do.	...	1/4 The Green	4
			— 14
West Bagborough	...	1/10 Vale View Cottages	10
do.	...	1/4 Hill View Cottages	4
do.	...	1/4 South View Cottages	4
do.	...	1/4 Parkside	4
do.	...	3/14 Heathfield	12
			— 34
West Hatch	...	1/4 Meare Elm	4
West Monkton	...	1/4 Titley Cottages	4
do.	...	1/4 Brittons Ash Cottages	4
do.	...	1/6 Hyde Lane Cottages	6
do.	...	1/14 School Road Cottages	14
do.	...	1/54 Elms Estate	54
do.	...	1/8 Bungalow Elms Estate	8
			— 90
TOTAL			949

Of the above total of 949 houses, 204 were built to replace houses dealt with by Slum Clearance in previous years, under the Housing Acts of 1930 and 1936.

REPORT OF THE CHIEF PUBLIC HEALTH INSPECTOR

The following is a tabular statement of work carried out during the year 1956 :—

Number and nature of inspections:—

Dwelling houses	...	...	...	...	...	206
Food premises	...	...	...	...	...	146
Slaughterhouses	...	...	...	...	...	2,061
Factories and Workshops	...	...	...	...	...	3
Water supplies	...	...	...	...	...	103
Drainage, foul ditches, etc.	...	...	...	...	...	126
Moveable dwellings	...	...	...	...	...	76
Infectious diseases	...	...	...	...	...	9
Refuse and salvage collection and disposal	...	...	...	...	...	361
Miscellaneous	...	...	...	...	...	83

Food Hygiene Regulations, 1955

During the year a detailed survey has been undertaken of all the food premises in the area and the results recorded. Advice has been freely offered to persons engaged in the food trade, leaflets explaining the requirements under the above Regulations have been issued and a well attended film show was held in conjunction with the Borough Public Health Department.

Water Samples

83 samples of water have been obtained for bacteriological examination during the year. Of this number 62 have been taken from private supplies, and reported on as follows:—

Grade 1.	11 samples.
2.	2 „
3.	6 „
4.	43 „
	<hr/>
	62
	<hr/>

Advice on improving existing supplies and warnings against drinking water without boiling have been issued in all appropriate cases.

21 samples of water have been obtained from public supplies in the area. The results are as follows:—

Supply.				No. of Samples.	Satisfactory.	Unsatis- factory.
West Bagborough	...	...		3	3	0
Cothelstone (chlorinated)	...			4	4	0
Lydeard St. Lawrence	...	...		3	3	0
Portman Supply (chlorinated)	...			2	2	0
Churchstanton (chlorinated)	...			3	3	0
Thurlbear	...	...	...	6	0	6

Investigations have been made in conjunction with the Surveyor to the Council in cases where reports fall short of the required standard.

Five chemical analyses have been taken and all were satisfactory.

Rodent Control

An operator is employed jointly with Wellington R.D.C. During the year the sewers, sewage disposal works and refuse dumps were inspected and treated systematically. Private dwelling houses and business premises have been surveyed and treated both from complaints made and infestations discovered during surveys. The inspections of farm premises have been carried out in areas suspected or where complaints had arisen, and co-operation with the Agricultural Executive Committee Pest Department has been working effectively. Summary of inspection and control measures taken are as follows:—

Report for 12 months ending 31st December, 1956

	Non-Agricultural				(5) Agricul- tural
	(1) Local Autho- rity	(2) Dwell- ing Houses	(3) All others (includ- ing Business Premises)	(4) Totals 1, 2 & 3	
I. Number of Properties in Local Authority's District	17	6,105	390	6,512	556
II. Number of Properties in- spected as a result of					
(a) Notification ...	3	106	9	118	9
(b) Surveys ...	14	428	148	590	138
(c) Otherwise ...	10	88	62	160	39
III. Total Inspections carried out—including re-inspec- tions ...	106	852	177	1,135	170
IV. Number of Properties in- spected which were found to be infested by					
(a) Rats { Major	—	11	6	17	4
Minor	10	177	34	221	48
(b) Mice { Major	—	3	1	4	—
Minor	—	25	2	27	4
V. Number of Infested Prop- erties treated by the L.A.	10	216	7	233	6
VI. Total Treatments carried out including re-treatments	47	250	7	304	7
VII. Number of Notices served under Section 4 of the Act					
(a) Treatment ...	—	—	—	—	—
(b) Structural Work (i.e. Proofing)	—	—	—	—	—
VIII. Number of cases in which default action was taken following the issue of a Notice under Section 4 of the Act ...	—	—	—	—	—
IX. Legal Proceedings ...	—	—	—	—	—
X. Number of "Block Con- trol" schemes carried out	—	8	—	—	—

Bakehouses

There are 7 bakehouses in the district.

Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1950

The number of persons registered with the Council as distributors of milk in the area is 9.

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulation, 1949 to 1953

Two dealer's licences are in force under the above Regulation, plus two dealer's supplementary licences.

Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulation, 1949 to 1954

Seven dealer's licences are in force under the above Regulation, plus two dealer's supplementary licences.

Ice Cream

The number of retailers of this product in the area is 48. They sell pre-packed ice cream, which is stored in properly constructed refrigerators.

Meat Inspection
Carcases and Offal inspected and condemned in whole or in part

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.	Horses
Number killed (if known)	1,128	307	23,347	22,398	26,201	0
Number inspected ...	1,128	307	23,347	22,275	26,151	0
All diseases except Tuberculosis and Cysticerci						
Whole carcasses condemned	—	1	5	20	49	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	24	11	5	303	581	0
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than tuberculosis and cysti- cerci	2.21	3.91	0.04	1.45	2.41	0
Tuberculosis only.						
Whole carcasses condemned	1	0	0	0	17	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	21	9	0	0	644	0
Percentage of the number inspected affected with tuberculosis	1.95	2.93	0	0	2.52	0
Cysticercosis						
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	2	0	0	0	0	0
Carcases submitted to treatment by refrigera- tion	2	0	0	0	0	0
Generalised and totally condemned	0	0	0	0	0	0

Refuse Collection and Disposal

This has continued on the lines of the re-organisation carried out in 1951. Disposal arrangements have been greatly improved during the year by the purchase of a diesel tractor complete with power operated bucket and 3-4 ton trailer for collecting and spreading covering material on the surface and faces of the tipping area.

The following details refer to times of collection and salvage recovered:—

Frequency of Collections in the Area

<i>Area of Collection.</i>	<i>Collection Day.</i>	<i>Frequency.</i>
1 North Curry (Village only), Stoke St. Gregory Village, Woodhill, Curload, Athelney	Tuesday	Fortnightly.
2 Remainder of Stoke St. Gregory Parish	Tuesday	Monthly.
3 Remainder of North Curry Parish ...	Tuesday	Monthly.
4 Blagdon Hill, Culmhead Camp, Blagdon, Sellick's Green, Fulwood, Staplehay, Eastbrook, Trull	Wednesday	Fortnightly.
5 Remainder of Pitminster Parish ...	Wednesday	Monthly.
6 Ash Priors, Combe Florey, Cothelstone, Halse, Lydeard St. Lawrence, Tolland, West Bagborough	Thursday	Monthly.
7 Sherford Camp	Saturday	Fortnightly.
8 Creech St. Michael Village, Ruishton, Stoke St. Mary (excluding Mountfields Avenue)	Tuesday	Fortnightly.
8a Mountfields Avenue, Stoke St. Mary ...	Tuesday	Weekly
9 Adsborough, Creech Heathfield, Langaller, Ham	Tuesday	Monthly.
10 Cheddon Fitzpaine	Wednesday	Monthly.
11 West Monkton	Wednesday	Fortnightly.
12 Bickenhall, Churchstanton, Corfe, Curland, Orchard Portman, Otterford, Staple Fitzpaine	Thursday	Monthly.
13 Kingston, Norton Fitzwarren ...	Thursday	Fortnightly
14 Staplegrove	Friday	Fortnightly.
15 Durston, Thornfalcon	Tuesday	Monthly.
16 Hatch Beauchamp, West Hatch ...	Wednesday	Monthly.
17 Bishops Lydeard	Friday	Weekly.
18 Bishops Hull	Monday	Weekly.

Salvage Collection and Sales

1956 proved to be a very difficult year for trading in salvage materials, prices and outlets being extremely uncertain. The following items were disposed of during the year, yielding a surplus of approximately £232 after paying all expenses and a bonus of 20% on sales to the collectors:—

Material.				T.	C.	Q.	lbs.	£	s.	d.
Newsprint	...	...	...	73	11	1	9	417	14	0
Cardboard	...	...	...	11	15	3	27	81	11	10
Rags	...	...	...	2	6	2	0	27	18	0
Wool	...	...	...		4	0	6	17	0	6
Sacking	...	...	...		8	2	0	3	8	3
Mixed iron	...	...	...	15	10	1	0	86	1	6
Bottles	...	...	...		219½	doz.		15	2	3
Light iron	...	...	...		19	2	0	2	8	9
Non-ferrous Metals	...	...	...		19	1	0	48	2	6
Battery Lead	...	...	...		4	1	26	12	11	0
Mixed String	...	...	...		7	0	0	2	11	4
Bed Ends	...	...	...	1	3	1	0	2	18	2
								107	10	0
								12	717	8
									1	

Food Poisoning Outbreaks

There were no outbreaks of food poisoning during the year.

Factories Act, 1937

The inspection of factories and workshops in the district from a public health point of view is carried out by the staff of the Public Health Department. Routine visits are paid to the various premises and the following table gives particulars of this work. It is to be noted that the term Factories as used in this connection now includes Workshops, which accounts for the large number on the Register in this Rural District.

Inspections for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Public Health Inspectors) :—

Premises.	Number on Register.	Number of		
		Inspec- tions.	Written notices.	Occupiers prose- cuted.
(i) Factories in which Section 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	9	0	0	0
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies	70	3	0	0
(iii) Other Premises under the Act (excluding out-workers' premises)	0	0	0	0
Total ...	79	3	0	0

National Assistance Act, 1948.

Section 50—Burial of the Dead

One notification was received during the year that a person in the area had died and that no suitable arrangements for the disposal of the body had been made. The burial was accordingly arranged by the Council.

THE END OF THE WORLD